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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional) Questions and Answers Regarding Testimony Before Post Office and Civil Service Committee

FROM: DD/Pers/EBS

STAT

STAT

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE 23 April 1984

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)	DATE RECEIVED	DATE FORWARDED	OFFICER'S INITIALS	COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)
1. DD/Pers				Bob,
2. D/Pers				Attached are responses to the questions you raised on Retirement. One question is still being worked on and is as follows:
3.				Ques:
4. DD/EBS				What is the history on the Board of Officers mentioned on page 5821 of 1963 hearing on CIARDS?
5.				
6.				We will provide the answer to this question as soon as possible.
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				

STAT

Cynthia
These were D/Pers's but he does not want to keep. I'm not sure if you have copies of every thing - If so - you could probably pitch

STAT

FORM 1-79 610 USE PREVIOUS EDITIONS

GPO : 1983

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House of Representatives
Committee on Post Office
and Civil Service
Washington, DC 20515

TELEPHONE (202) 225-4054

COMMITTEE ON POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE

CONTINUATION OF HEARINGS ON SUPPLEMENTAL RETIREMENT PLAN

Thursday, April 25, 1985

WITNESS LIST

1. William J. Anderson, Director, General Government Division, General Accounting Office.

2. PANEL:

   Herman J. Cohen, Acting Director General of the Foreign Service and Acting Director of Personnel, Department of State; and

   Robert W. Magee, Director of Personnel, Central Intelligence Agency.

3. PANEL:

   Lee Colwell, Executive Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation; and

   Charles E. Weithoner, Associate Administrator for Human Resource Management, Federal Aviation Administration.

4. PANEL:

   Dennis K. Hays, President, American Foreign Service Association;

   Bruce B. Henry, President, National Association of Air Traffic Specialists; and

   Thomas K. Reilly, Legislative Assistant, Department of Governmental Affairs and Public Relations, International Association of Fire Fighters.

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Additional info needed for hearings on the 25th April 85

AGENCY POPULATION

ON BOARD

MALES = 62%
FEMALES = 38%

FEMALE RETIREES

FY 84

26% OF ALL RETIREES WERE FEMALES

25% OF FEMALE RETIREES WERE GS-07 AND BELOW

53% OF FEMALE RETIREES WERE GS-09 AND BELOW

FY 83

24% OF ALL RETIREES WERE FEMALES

33% OF FEMALE RETIREES WERE GS-07 AND BELOW

47% OF FEMALE RETIREES WERE GS-09 AND BELOW

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STATEMENT OF CHARLES E. WEITHONER, ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, BEFORE THE HOUSE POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE COMMITTEE, CONCERNING EARLY RETIREMENT PROVISIONS UNDER A SUPPLEMENTAL RETIREMENT PROGRAM. APRIL 25, 1985.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I welcome the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the views of the Federal Aviation Administration concerning the continued need for early retirement for our air traffic controller workforce.

As the Committee is aware, early retirement provisions for air traffic controllers were first enacted in 1972 as part of Public Law 92-297. The rationale for enacting such retirement legislation was simple: air traffic control was considered to be a young person's occupation. That fundamental conclusion, documented by experts at the time, remains every bit as true today.

When the FAA proposed that the Congress establish an early retirement program for controllers, it did so based upon data which had been gathered over a period of time concerning our controller workforce. We developed a considerable body of evidence which demonstrated a distinct correlation between the age of tower and center controllers and their ability to control traffic effectively. This correlation is evident from

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the outset of controller training at the FAA Academy, through field training and the later stages of controllers' careers. Studies consistently showed chronological age to be inversely related to scores on numerous aptitude tests, various indices of Academy training progress, and ratings of journeyman-level job performance.

The need to rapidly process information, make mental judgments in time-critical situations, and to learn and apply new procedures, techniques, and information concerning complex subject matter in a demanding environment are all basic elements of a controller's job. It has been shown repeatedly, however, that, as a natural part of the aging process, these and related kinds of skills begin to decline. Though different skills may decline at different rates for different people, there is no question but that it will occur for all individuals at some time during the aging process. Accordingly, the evidence clearly pointed to the conclusion that air traffic control work was best done by young people. Therefore, an early retirement program, coupled with a maximum retention age, was established in law as the appropriate means to provide a youthful workforce.

One problem frequently encountered before the enactment of early retirement provisions for controllers was that it was difficult--both for managers and for employees--to decide what

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course of action to take when a controller's skills were beginning to decline somewhat, though still marginally acceptable. The availability of early retirement today provides a needed and valuable alternative for such individuals who typically recognize themselves that their skills have begun to decline.

In the 13 years since the Congress recognized the need for enactment of early retirement provisions for air traffic controllers, we have had an ongoing opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of these provisions. This operational experience confirms for us that these provisions continue to be necessary to assist us in maintaining a vigorous and youthful controller workforce that can best provide safe service to the American travelling public.

Let me elaborate on our experience with the early retirement provisions for controllers. From 1969 through 1971, just prior to enactment of early retirement legislation for controllers, about 400 controllers retired. Seventy percent of these were disability retirements; only 30 percent were by those who met normal requirements for retirement.

From 1972 through 1979 medical disability retirements began to decrease with a corresponding increase in early retirements. During the 5 years from 1980 through 1984, medical retirements

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dropped to 18 percent and early retirements increased to 59 percent of total retirements of our controllers and first-line supervisors. In the last 2 years, only 10 percent have been medical retirements and 73 percent were early retirements.

This experience clearly shows, in our view, that continuation of special retirement provisions provided by Public Law 92-297 is essential to the future operation of the air traffic control system. The early retirement program has become the principal and, we believe, proper avenue for our controllers and our first-line supervisors to leave the air traffic control system, if necessary, when they are not eligible for normal retirement. We believe this promotes system safety by allowing controllers whose skills have diminished with age to leave the system.

Before closing, Mr. Chairman, let add that this need is fully recognized within the Administration and that any Administration proposal for a supplementary retirement system will provide for a continued early retirement program for controllers. We also believe that benefits under such a program must be sufficient not only to treat such employees equitably for their service, but also to preclude the problems of an aging work force we experienced before 1972. In that respect, we believe that an early retirement program needs to compensate employees for the fact that Social Security

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benefits will not begin until age 62. Specifically, it is our conviction that the present provisions of Public Law 92-297 regarding early retirement, that is, eligibility at age 50 with 20 years of service or with 25 years of service at any age, need to be incorporated in any new retirement system for federal employees.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, I would like to note that we have 81 firefighters who work at National and Dulles Airports. In November 1977, I testified before the Subcommittee on Compensation and Employee Benefits supporting continued early retirement for FAA firefighters. Although you have not asked us to address the need for early retirement for firefighters today, I would like to indicate that we believe there continues to be a valid need to provide for early retirement for them as well.

Mr. Chairman, that completes my prepared statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have at this time.

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